

Stow Community Preservation Committee (CPC) Frequently Asked Questions:

How much money does Stow have in its Community Preservation Fund?

As of the end of fiscal year 2004, the Community Preservation Fund had an unallocated amount of approximately \$1 million, resulting from a property tax surcharge and matching state funds since 2001.

How and when must the Community Preservation Fund be spent?

A minimum of 10% of the annual revenues of the fund must be used for each of the three core community concerns mandated by the Community Preservation Act: historical preservation, open space protection and low and moderate income housing. The remaining 70% can be allocated for any combination of the allowed uses or for land for recreational use. Land for recreational use cannot occur until after 10% of funds are expended on open space. There is no time limit for spending any of these funds.

Stow adopted the CPA in 2001. What have we done since then?

Since Stow adopted the CPA in May 2001, the CPC has been established, spoke with various Town organizations and representatives and created a Community Preservation Plan. Additionally, the CPC has completed the paperwork necessary to obtain state matching funds for the past three years. At Town Meeting in May 2003, the CPC sponsored several articles that were approved, including the reservation of \$150,000 for affordable housing. At Town Meeting in May 2004, the CPC sponsored more articles that were approved, including funds for purchasing deed restrictions for affordable housing, the creation of parking for the old West School House, protecting the Blacksmith Shop, and reserving administrative funds for appraising property for an Agricultural Preservation Restriction and for transferring conservation land to the Town.

What are the priorities for the CPC?

The CPC is obligated to consider historical preservation, open space protection and low and moderate income (also known as affordable) housing. The most pressing, current need for the town of Stow is the need for affordable housing. For FY2005, the CPC continues to be focused on developing a program that will provide more affordable housing within Stow using existing housing stock with the goal of having at least five affordable properties.

Why are there so many people on the CPC? [\[link to page with answer\]](#)

The Community Preservation Act stipulates that a Community Preservation Committee must be composed of 5-9 members, representing various boards in the community. The Stow CPC has nine formal members, representing: the Open Space Committee, the Recreation Commission, the Historical Commission, the Conservation Commission, the Planning Board, the Finance Committee, the Stow Housing Authority, Council on Aging and the Assessor's Office. Stow voters opted for nine members to encourage a comprehensive perspective for the CPC.

When will we get more affordable housing as a result of the May 2003 and 2004 Town Meeting votes?

The Town Meeting held in May 2003 approved the CPC to reserve \$150,000 from the Community Preservation Fund for obtaining affordable housing. In May 2004, Town Meeting approved another \$100,000 to extend this program. We are currently completing an unprecedented deed restriction for purchasing affordability rights on existing housing and plan to roll this out to the community. The goal is to have at least five properties signed up for this program by the end of FY2005. Additionally, at the May 2004 Town Meeting, the Town purchased 37 permanent deed restrictions to guarantee affordable housing in perpetuity.

What historical projects have been funded by the Community Preservation Fund?

The Community Preservation Fund has funded the engineering for the parking of the historic West School and the protection of the Blacksmith Shop. A variety of other potential projects has also been identified, and the CPC is waiting for formal proposals. The Stow CPC encourages historical project proposals to be submitted through the Stow Historical Commission.

What open space projects have been funded by the Community Preservation Fund?

Although a project was proposed and approved at Town Meeting in May 2003, this project appears to be no longer viable. In May 2004, the Town approved to allocate funds to address administrative costs related to transferring open space parcels to the Town and to appraise property for an Agricultural Preservation Restriction. The Stow CPC encourages proposals for new open space-related projects.

What affordable housing projects have been funded by the Community Preservation Fund?

The Stow CPC has been developing an affordable housing program using existing housing stock within Stow. Funds are available for purchasing a deed restriction for eligible properties that guarantee affordability in perpetuity. The Stow CPC encourages interested applicants to contact the CPC for more information.

Additionally, the Town voted at the 2004 Town Meeting to purchase 37 permanent deed restrictions to guarantee affordable housing in perpetuity.

How does the CPC support the Master Plan?

The Stow CPC uses its authority under the Community Preservation Act to complement the Master Plan. By adopting the CPA, Stow now has a source to help implement the Master Plan.

How do I get on the agenda for a CPC meeting?

To get on the agenda for a Stow CPC meeting, contact the CPC Coordinator, Susan Hosier, at 978-897-9649 or susanhosier@earthlink.net.

How do I know what a CPC meeting will discuss?

An agenda for each Stow CPC meeting is posted 24 hours prior to a meeting on the bulletin board outside the entrance of the Stow Town Building. Additionally, agendas can be obtained from the Stow Town Clerk and are available at every CPC meeting.

How can I tell the CPC what's on my mind?

Any resident of Stow can communicate with the Stow CPC at any time. The most effective means of communication is to attend a CPC meeting or write a letter to the CPC. The CPC typically has "Public Participation" on its agenda for each meeting. Additionally, all written communications are copied and distributed to every CPC member.

Other Related Information

Massachusetts General Law Section 44B. Community Preservation

<http://www.state.ma.us/legis/laws/mgl/44B-5.htm>

Massachusetts EOEA Community Preservation Initiative <http://commpres.env.state.ma.us/index.asp>

Massachusetts Community Preservation Act Coalition – site sponsored by Citizens Housing and Planning Association <http://www.communitypreservation.org>